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VOLUME 9 NUMBER 2

Yankee WINGS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE YANKEE AIR FORCE

YANKEE AIR FORCE

Also in this issue...

- **"All The Presidents' Planes"**
- **The Restoration of the C-47**
- **"Chennault: A Flying Tiger Legend"**

...and more!

Yankee WINGS

Official Publication of The Yankee Air Force ©

INSIDE YANKEE WINGS

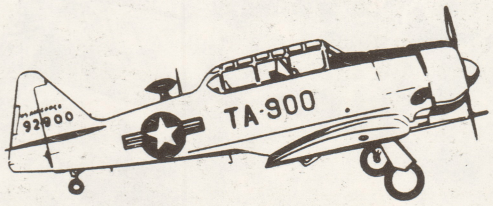
The work of several new contributors appears in this issue. The lead story, on *Air Force One*, should have wide reader interest, because of the effect of the Presidency on each of us. **Joe Hurley** and **Pat Miller-Hurley** are former Boeing engineers, both of whom worked on the *Air Force One* Program. Their informative article is enhanced with sketches of the new aircraft's interior, courtesy of the USAF Aeronautical Systems Division, and the superb photos in the centerspread, provided by the U.S. Air Force Museum.

We think you'll also enjoy the account of the trailing wire antenna by a former B-24 radioman, **Michael Donahue.** If it brings a smile to your face, remember that this is the April issue. We'll also welcome **L.G. Redmond,** who contributed the YAF Laf on page 16.

Still more aviation history may be found in **Jack Stankrauff's** article on Claire Chennault (Tale Spins).

We think that, overall, this is another winning issue.

- Jim Hanford



ON THE COVER

Crewmen tumble from the plummeting control car as the nation's first large rigid airship, *USS SHENANDOAH*, breaks up over eastern Ohio, early on the morning of September 3, 1925, in this rendering by artist **Jim Serdenis**. Fourteen of the crew, including the captain, LCDR. Zachary Landsdowne, died, and the aftershocks were similar in impact to the loss of the space shuttle, *Challenger*.

President.....George Whitfield
Editor.....Jim Hanford
Graphic Design.....Dick Melton
.....Linda Terentiak
Advertising.....Soren Kalen
Staff.....Graham Armstrong, George Binson, Chuck Buehner, Don Burke, Todd Hackbarth, Earl Hewett, Randy Hotton, Toni Koski, Charlie Lingenfelter, Dennis Norton, Robert Pauley, Lana Presley, Brian Rogers, Jack Stankrauff, Paul G. Tardiff
Distribution.....Charles and Joann Lingenfelter, Dean and Jeanne Green, Soren Kalen.

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CONTENTS

Editorial - *Jim Hanford*..... 2
All The Presidents' Planes - *Joe Hurley & Pat Miller-Hurley*..... 3
Soviet MiG-15 To Appear- *Ray Hunter*..... 6
The Dilemma of the Trailing Wire Antenna - *Michael J. Donahue*..... 7
Tale Spins - *Jack Stankrauff*..... 9
The Photo Section.....10
Board Report.....15
Membership Report- *Charlie Lingenfelter*.....15
Restoration News.....16
Reunions.....16
Division News.....17
Museumology-*Brian Rogers*.....18
Letters to the Editor.....18
Calendar.....20

ALL THE PRESIDENTS' PLANES

by Joe Hurley and Pat Miller-Hurley

When Air Force One takes off, it carries a precious cargo, the President of the United States. The aircraft that our presidents have used are history in themselves. Presidents did not travel much until the United States was over 150 years old. Before WW II, only two U.S. presidents had left the country while in office. Teddy Roosevelt made one quick boat trip to Panama, and Woodrow Wilson journeyed to Europe after WW I ended.

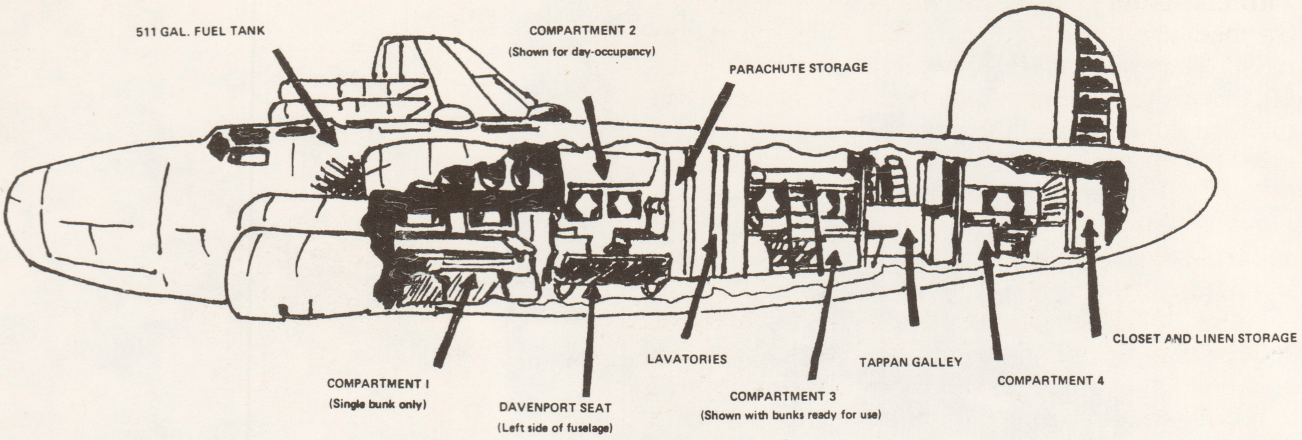
Many historic events have occurred on Air Force One. One of the most famous events has to be when Lyndon Baines Johnson was sworn into office aboard the Presidential aircraft following John F. Kennedy's assassination in Dallas.

The first president to use air travel outside of the United States was Franklin D. Roosevelt, who flew to Casablanca, Morocco, during WW II to meet with the British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill. Planning for FDR's hopscotch flight to northern Africa - through air space that was still a war zone - was on a "need to know" basis. It was only after he had met with Churchill and allied commanders to plan the D-day assault, that the American public (and the rest of the world) learned of the historic, first-overseas flight by a U.S. president.

Roosevelt's trip in January 1943 had not been on military planes, but rather by commercial aircraft. The aircraft crews were commercial crews, which had been pressed into wartime service. A Pan American Airways Boeing 314 flying boat (which required water instead of a runway for take off and landing) handled the transatlantic portions of the trip between Miami and the west coast of Africa. A Trans World Airlines C-54 carried Roosevelt on the African continent. FDR did fly in a "Presidential" plane on one trip before his death. It was a Douglas C-54 Skymaster - the military version of the DC-4. Dubbed *The Sacred Cow* by the press, it was the first of a succession of aircraft to be viewed by the public as "The President's Plane". Even though FDR only flew one more time, *The Sacred Cow* was retained for use by Eleanor Roosevelt and many high ranking officials.

Unlike Roosevelt, Harry Truman liked flying and used *The Sacred Cow* often. American Airlines agreed to let the Air Force lay claim to one of the DC-6s, which Douglas Aircraft Corporation had on its production line for the commercial carrier. Pilot Lt. Col. Henry Myers named the new aircraft *Independence*, after the President's Missouri hometown and because the plane was commissioned on Independence Day 1947.

If Truman liked flying, Dwight Eisenhower loved it. The retired army general is to date the only licensed pilot to serve in the oval office. Air Force brass noted that the new Commander-in-Chief had developed a special liking for the Lockheed Model 749 Constellation while serving in Europe. Eisenhower's first aircraft, a Constellation, was named *Columbine II*, which was later succeeded by the *Columbine III*, a Lockheed Super-Constellation. Although the propeller-driven *Columbine III* remained his official plane, Ike brought the presidency into the jet age. He accomplished this



with a whirlwind tour of 11 European, African, and Asian nations in 18 days in 1959 in a Boeing 707.

John F. Kennedy also preferred jet travel and made little use of the Douglas DC-6 assigned by the Air Force. In 1962 Kennedy brought the President's official aircraft into the jet age, with the purchase of an improved version of a Boeing 707-320C. The improvements included a longer, wider wing span, so she could land on a shorter runway than her sisters. The aircraft had a flying range of 7000 miles without refueling.

Designer Raymond Loewy, assisted by First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, created the subtle but impressive blue and white paint scheme still used today. Instead of "United States Air Force" the craft carried the Presidential Seal, American flags, and the words "United States of America" on the fuselage. Mrs. Kennedy was the first to commission crystal glassware to be used on the Presidential aircraft. Sadly, though, this jet served Kennedy only 13 months. In November, 1963, it returned from Dallas with his body and the new President, Lyndon Johnson.

With Johnson in the White House, Air Force One traveled the skies between Washington and Texas quite often. Johnson loved to return to the LBJ ranch on the Pedernales River in central Texas. The unpopular war in Vietnam later forced Johnson to give up the White House and his plane.

The aircraft purchased for President Kennedy next served Richard Nixon. In March, 1969, it returned to the Boeing Factory for its first major overhaul. Boeing and the White House continued a floor plan that has remained basically unchanged until the most recent Air Force One was released. Although the first 707 was superceded in December 1972 by a near twin, the earlier jet continued to serve as a back up aircraft throughout the Ford, Carter and Reagan presidencies.

For 26 years, the United States presidents flew aboard a 707-320C aircraft, known as Air Force One, but now there is a new Air Force One, commissioned by President Reagan. It is a Boeing 747-200 series, highly modified to serve as the latest presidential aircraft.

The two 707-320C aircraft began their service in 1962 and 1973 at a combined cost of $15 million. These planes needed to be replaced due to age, some 1,024,897 miles having been logged. The engines had become too noisy for flight rules, and spare parts for 707-320C aircraft are also becoming scarce.

One principal and one back up 747-200b aircraft were built by Boeing company in Everett, Washington. The planes were outfitted and painted in Wichita, Kansas. then delivered by Boeing to the Air Force. The contract cost for the two aircraft was $249.8 million. The cost increases to 300 million when crew training, support units and spare parts are included. The Air Force designation for the aircraft type is VC-25A. The primary aircraft's tail number is 28000.

The 747-200B can operate in all climates, year round. It cruises at 484 knots (560 mph) at an altitude of 35,000 feet. It can carry 70 passengers and 23 crew and ground personnel. The aircraft has an unrefueled range of 6,200 nautical miles (7,140 statute miles), but does have air refueling capability. Its maximum gross weight is 836,000 pounds. The plane is powered conventionally by four General Electric Cf6-80C2B1 engines, which can deliver 56,750 pounds of thrust.

Air Force One is hardened against electro-magnetic pulse from a nuclear explosion. When the aircraft is at an airport, it can serve as a complete communications hub for the presidential party. The sophisticated communications equipment includes secure voice terminals and cryptographic equipment.

The plane's interior encloses an area of 4,000 square feet. Forward in the plane is a spacious bedroom, or stateroom, with vanity, closets and lavatory. A private office is nearby. A combination conference/dining room is available for the president, family and staff. There is a staff lounge, a guest area, and working stations

with computers. Near the tail is the media center with telex terminals. The two galleys can serve 100 meals at one time. Six lavatories are provided for the passengers, and there is also an emergency treatment medical facility aboard. The upper deck houses a separate rest area and mini-galley for the crew.

The 747-200B aircraft has a reduced need for conventional ground support equipment. There is a built-in airstairs located fore and aft on the left side. The airstairs allow entry to the plane without a portable stairway. There is also a built-in conveyor-type system capable of loading luggage and other small cargo. A second auxiliary power unit, housed in the tail, enables the plane to be more self sufficient.

All presidential aircraft are maintained by the Military Airlift Command's 89th Military Airlift Wing, located at Andrews Air Force Base, Maryland. The Air Force One program is managed by the Aeronautical Systems Division, located at Wright Patterson AFB, outside of Dayton, Ohio. *Line art courtesy of Aeronautical Systems Division.*

For Further Reading

Editors Note: Information about the President's aircraft is difficult to find, however the following sources contain well researched and detailed information:

~J.F. ter Horst & Col. Ralph Albertazzie; *The Flying White House;* (1979); Coward, McCann & Geoghegan, Inc.; New York

Ter Horst is a former columnist for *The Detroit News*, and Albertazzie was commander of Air Force One from 1969-1974.

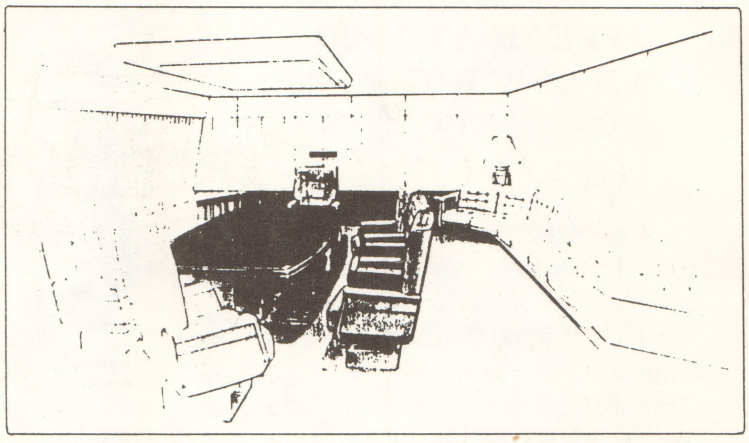
The following articles are all by Robert C. Mikesh, USAF (Ret.), who is now working for the National Air and Space Museum.

~ "FDR and the *Guess Where II*"; *Air Force Magazine*; February 1971

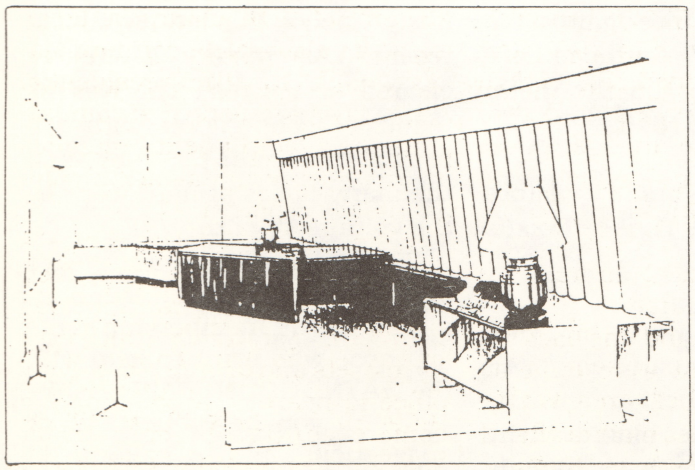
~ "Mission: Flying the President"; *AeroSpace Historian*; Winter, 1968

~ "Presidential Aircraft"; *American Aviation Historical Society Journal*, Summer 1963.

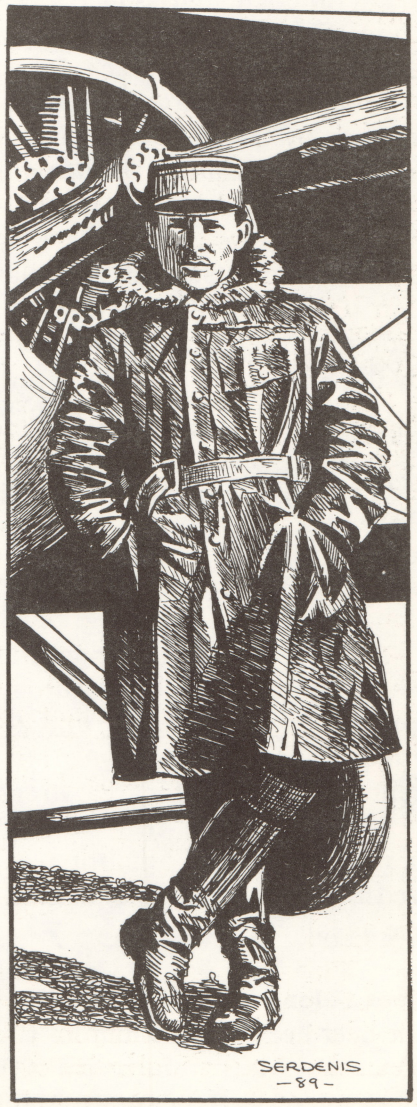
The most extensive source on all Presidential aircraft to date, including the Ford Trimotor in which President-Elect FDR flew to the 1932 Democratic Convention in Chicago. ✪



Air Force One ~ Conference Dining Room



Air Force One ~ Presidential Office



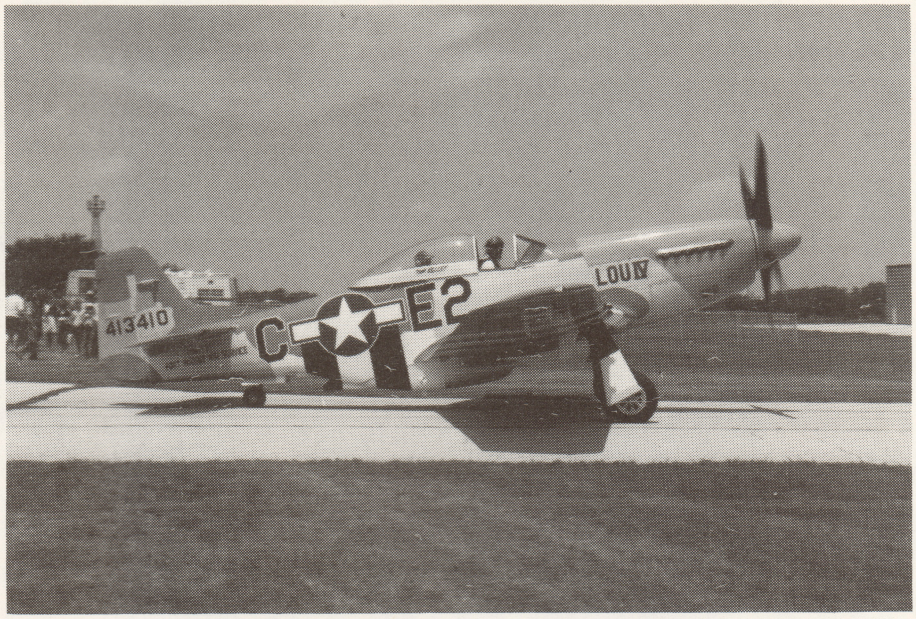
CHARLES NUNGESSER
(45 Victories)
Disappeared in 1927 while trying to fly the Atlantic

SOVIET MiG-15 TO APPEAR AT 1990 WILLOW RUN AIR SHOW

by Ray Hunter

A Soviet MiG-15 is scheduled to make the first-ever appearance by that type in Wayne County at the 1990 Wayne County Air Show, June 23-24. The US Army Golden Knights Parachute Demonstration Team will share top billing with the Soviet fighter.

Other acts which are scheduled include: Three-ship aerobatics by Team America; Jim Roberts in a Long EZ; Bob Barden and his Stearman; wing-walker Eddie "The Grip" Green; a glider demonstration by Oscar Boesch; USAF and Navy aircraft flight demonstrations; general aviation exhibits; and fly-bys and displays by the Michigan Helicopter Association. Other activities will include radio-controlled aircraft displays by the Sky Masters RC Club, and a YAF-sponsored display of historic aircraft. Danny Clisham will perform as the Master of Ceremonies.



Typical of the warbirds one may see at an airshow is this P-51D owned by Ft. Wayne Air Service, photographed at Dixon, Illinois, in 1985. (J.Hanford)

YAF PARTICIPATION

This year, like last year, we will close the museum on Saturday and Sunday of the show, and literally "take the Yankee Air Museum" to the spectator area. Areas in which the YAF has planned participation, and amount realized from the same activity in 1989, are as follows:

Beer Sales: The YAF will provide the beer license and labor for the concessionaire in return for a 10% share of verified sales. In 1989 our net was $2072.

Retail Sales: The Gift Shop was set up under the C-47 wing and grossed $4,467. Net profit was $2234.

Cockpit Photos in various museum aircraft was a big winner. Total profit was $3302.

Membership Drive: Last year's tremendous effort by the Membership Branch resulted in 15 new YAF members and a net of $1190.

Dog Tag Sales: Once again, a big winner. The only overhead here was a generator and the metal blanks. Profit - $1615.

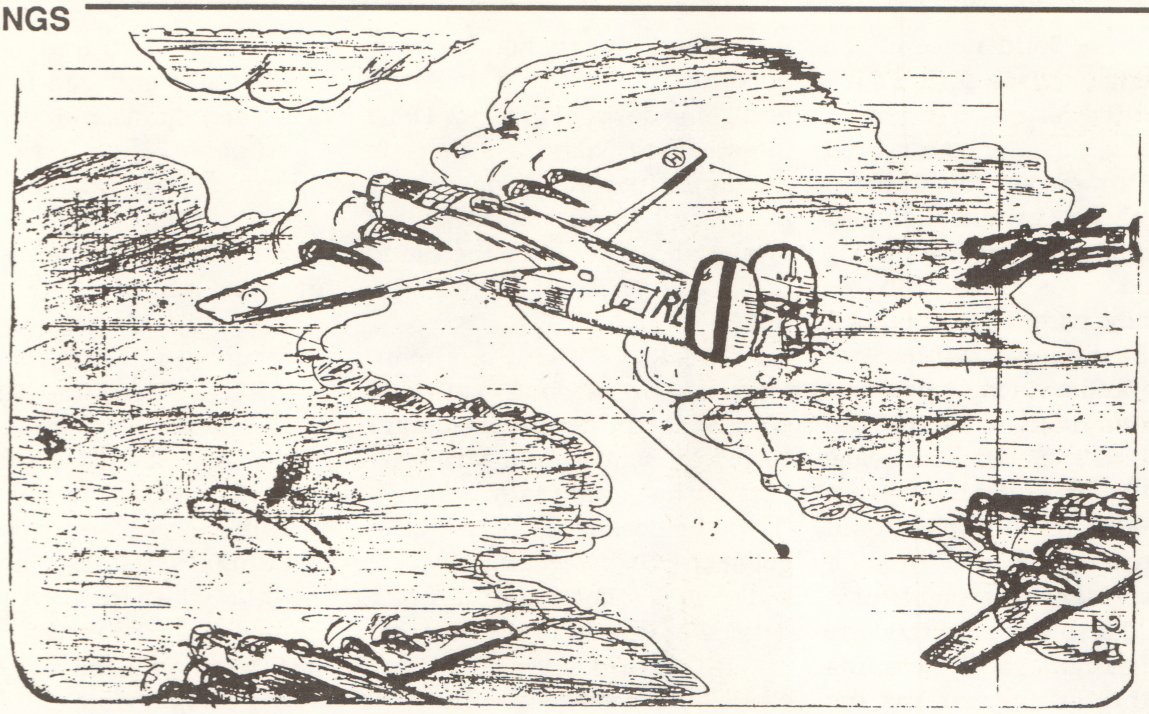
Aircraft Tours: Airshow visitors paid $752 to see *Yankee Doodle Dandy*.

Ticket Presales: Here's how you, as YAF members can help. YAF members in the local area will be getting ticket order blanks in the mail — you may have already received them! By ordering your tickets in advance, you will save $3.00 per ticket over gate prices, and each ticket sold by mail will earn $1.00 for the Yankee Air Force. Give the order blanks to your friends and neighbors. If you need more, get them from the museum.

Presale tickets will also be available in the gift shop. In 1989, we earned $949 by selling tickets.

Total profit for The Yankee Air Force in 1989 was over $12,000 with very little risk. It was most likely one of the few events in recent YAF history where we cleared "six figures". This was the result of cooperation with the promoter, careful planning, and the many hours of hard work by the volunteers of the YAF.

We need workers for this year's event. A sign-up book has been placed in the membership room for those who want to help with the WAYNE COUNTY AIR SHOW - 1990. If you have questions or suggestions, please call me at home (668-6059) or at work (936-0142). ✪



THE DILEMMA OF THE TRAILING WIRE ANTENNA

by Michael J. Donahue (93rd BG)

The trailing wire antenna is one type of radio antenna found on a B-24 Liberator bomber. It is used for long range radio transmission on medium or low frequencies. It is 150 feet of fine flexible copper wire wound around a spool type reel and weighted at the trailing end by a 10 pound lead weight. When not in use the weighted end fits flush against the fuselage on the undercarriage of the bomber. When long range transmission is necessary, the reel type mechanism, located in the radio compartment, is cranked out so that the weighted wire trails below and behind the plane. The training manual reads,"know your length of antenna with which you are operating. Full transmission may save the life of your crew."

Now let me take you back in time to where this story begins. It's September 30, 1944. The war in Europe is going well against the Nazis. On this day our plane, a B-24 heavy bomber, called, *Ma's Worry*, will lead the 2nd Air Division of the 8th Air Force, to a target in Hamm, Germany.

Major Brown and Captain Spencer of the 409th sqd. 93rd bomb group will be the lead pilots. This bombing mission will be our 17th.

My duties as a radio-operator gunner during this eight hour mission will be to send and receive coded messages to Division Headquarters in England. Take off and assembly from our base at Hartwick went well. With the group together we crossed the English Channel at 08:00 hours. Flying over enemy territory at 25000 feet we picked up heavy flak on the bomb run and over the target. After the bombs were dropped on the target, it was time for me to send a strike report back to our base in England. For this long range transmission I cranked out the trailing wire antenna to its fullest length. With the bombs gone and the plane much lighter, our air speed must have increased. The training manual warned us not to reel out the antenna if the air speed exceeds 240 mph. This could have been the cause of the problem that now plagued me.

With the transmission completed I proceeded to reel the wire into my radio compartment. About one quarter of the way in, the wire became a tangled, twisted mess on the spool of the reel. There was no way I could reel the wire in any further. Over 100 feet of twisted line trailed helplessly behind the bomber. I tried feverishly to untangle the twisted mess. Working with heavy gloves on made it very difficult. I couldn't dare remove them because of the sub-zero cold my fingers would have stuck fast to the metal wire.

Over the loud noise of the plane's engines I could hear the bursts of flak and the thump of the 50 caliber machine guns fired by our gunners as the German fighter planes flew through our formation. World War II was going on around me as I worked to free this bloody wire. I imagined I could see the damn weighted wire swinging and swaying below our bomber and finally crashing into the flight deck of the plane below us. That could really hurt somebody. Needless to say it would cause great concern to the pilot and crew of the other bomber.

I could also visualize the wire getting caught and winding around the turning props of the bomber below us, thus causing the right side of our plane's fuselage to be ripped apart. This could result in the loss of our plane as well as the whole crew. If the crew ever found this out they would kill me.

The radio-operator's manual states,"WARNING: The trailing wire antenna must be reeled in before landing." If we land with that turkey trailing behind us, there's a good possibility that the bastard may bounce off of the runway and come crashing through the waste window inflicting serious injuries upon our tail gunner. Walter Borland would never forgive me if I let a thing like that happen.

I reached a decision:"I must cut the wire and release the antenna from the plane. Consider first what might happen when you drop that heavy weight on the innocent people below. Don't be an idiot, for God's sake. You're worried about dropping a 10 lb. weight when your bomber just released three tons of bombs? Besides this is war; that's not cream puffs they're shooting at you. What about the bomber flying on your wing, taking a direct hit and going down in flames? Don't forget about your last pass in London. Remember how those buzz bombs and V-2s kept you awake all night? Cut the damn thing and get back to your duties."

The pilot called me on the intercom. In a loud voice he says,"What the hell are you doing? Have you sent in that strike report?" Now I am really nervous. "Hope he doesn't find out what's going on. He has enough trouble trying to feather the prop of a dead shot up engine.

"My God, that burst of flak was close. I have got to take this flak suit off." It's 60 degrees below zero, but I am sweating like a bull. It's a good thing I am on oxygen; my breathing is rapid. Better turn up the valve a little.

Wham! Flak hits the dome of the top turret gun, plexiglass comes falling down around me. I look up into the turret where Neadue, the engineer is sitting. I fear the worst, but he is OK. The shrapnel passed through the dome and hit Ned in the flak helmet.

Once again I look at the tangled mess of wire and realize the situation has not gotten any better. Kelly the navigator calls me on the intercom and wants a position report. Now I have got to cut the wire and switch to the fixed wire antenna. With a firm grasp on the wire with pliers, I apply the right amount of pressure and cut the wire. In a flash the end of the wire disappeared and along with the heavy weight fell to earth.

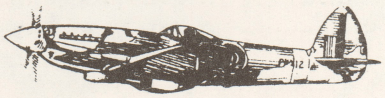
Again my imagination began to run away with me. I visualized the weight crashing through a huge round stained glass window in an ancient old cathedral somewhere in Germany. In a few seconds I have destroyed a work of art that has endured for centuries. Then again it may drop on an oil refinery, blow up a munition dump, or discourage and interrupt a German Field Marshal in his endeavors to seduce a beautiful young maiden.

Anyway, it's gone and good riddance. It will be a cold day in hell before I use that damn antenna again.

All in all it was a successful mission. We destroyed the target and the group returned with minimum casualties.

Although there is no evidence in the files or the record books of the 8th Air Force that any of these events or happenings ever took place, I believe that after I released that trailing wire antenna I should have received some credit for saving our plane from destruction and possibly the lives of our crew. Destroying the oil refinery and blowing up a munitions dump is doubtful and would be difficult to prove. I would like to take credit for putting that oversexed German Field Marshal out of his misery. About the stained glass window, well, it was probably broken anyway.

After all these years I wonder what ever happened to that leaded weight and where it finally ended up. I am not really sure, and I would not swear to it, but when I watched President Reagan and the German Chancellor walk through the SS military cemetery in Bitburg, Germany, for a second I thought I saw hanging in the background a rusted old trailing wire antenna weight with a twisted length of tarnished copper wire hanging peacefully from a huge tree limb in the cemetery. ✪



TALE SPINS

by Jack B. Stankrauff

CHENNAULT: A FLYING TIGER LEGEND

Iron-willed Claire Chennault was one of the real American heroes of World War II. An aviation legend in his own right, Chennault resigned from the Army Air Corps in 1937, and went to China to organize their air force. He is best remembered as the leader of the Flying Tigers, who resolutely fought the Japanese in the skies over Burma and China. Chennault's story is one of continuous conflicts with superiors, frustration, fierce loyalty to his men, self-sacrifice, consuming ego, Central Intelligence Agency involvement, and dedication to duty.

Born on December 6, 1893 in Commerce, Texas and raised in the back bayous of Louisiana, Claire Lee Chennault entered Louisiana State University at the age of 16. He used various birth dates between 1890 and 1893 when attending L.S.U., enlisting in the Army and applying for a passport. He considered a military education until he visited the U.S. Naval Academy and witnessed the severe discipline there. After dropping out of L.S.U. and a series of odd jobs, Chennault enlisted in the Army in 1917 when the United States entered World War I. Commissioned as an infantry Second Lieutenant, he was stationed near Kelly Field, Texas. There, the enterprising Chennault took flying lessons and later trained and qualified as a pilot. He loved to box, hunt and fish in his spare time endowing him with that common touch which endeared him to the men under his command in later years. Chennault was struck down with influenza while stationed in Texas and left for dead by Army medics. Luckily, a Kelly Field friend found him and nursed him back to health with liberal prescriptions of bourbon.

Tactical Teacher

In 1920, the Army Air Corps Tactical School was established at Langley Field, Virginia, where Italian Guilio Douhet's doctrine of bombing an enemy into defeat using bombers was unquestioned policy and operating practice. When the Tactical School was moved to Maxwell Field near Montgomery, Alabama in 1931, Chennault was assigned as pursuit instructor. In his classes, he dogmatically advocated a team of planes working in pairs to dive and run while protecting each other. He further stressed that fighter aircraft, to gain the advantage of tactical mass, should be organized in elements (two or three fighters), flights (two or three elements), squadrons (two or three flights), groups (two or three squadrons), and wings (two or three groups). He also taught fighter plane formation flying to lead and protect friendly bombers or to offensively attack enemy bombers.

Claire Chennault as an Army Captain, Ca. 1936

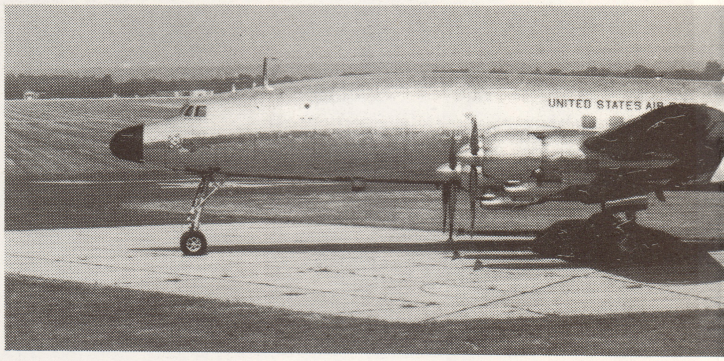
Chennault was always the innovator. During war games and maneuvers, he developed an air defense warning system by stationing men with telephones atop a water tower to warn of approaching enemy planes. He later improved on this innovation by setting up a central plotting center from which interceptors would be directed to meet the attacking planes.

These views about air defense and fighter tactics came from, as Chennault saw it, his backwoods logic and common sense as the difference between the hunter and the hunted. He tirelessly espoused his opinions on fighter pursuit tactics various armed forces journals and Army Air Corps training pamphlets. Chennault's theories would prove him right 10 years later in the skies over Europe as unescorted American bombers suffered severe losses until long-range fighter escorts became available!

Claire Chennault's outlet was flying in the Three Men on a Flying Trapeze. This Air Corps team, a forerunner of today's Air Force Thunderbirds, performed all over the country at fairs, air shows and other public events. Demonstration team flying was once almost fatal to Chennault when team member Haywood Hansell flew too close and immobilized the elevators of Chennault's plane! Demo team flying also contributed to the pursuit concepts which he espoused in published articles and later employed in the China and Burma skies during World War II.

Doctrinal Deadlock

His views diametrically opposed those of many superiors, who held that heavily-armed bombers could win any and all future wars. During November of 1934, the Howell Commission (headed by newspaper owner Clark Howell) held hearings to discuss the new role of military aviation. Despite the fact that the Air Corps refused him travel expenses, Chennault voluntarily went to Washington and testified. Without hesitation Captain Chennault expressed his views on fighters which so infuriated the War Department's Liaison Officer, Major General C.E. Kilbourne, that his name was removed from the list of officers scheduled to attend the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth,



1 Boeing 707-353B (C-137C), the primary Presidential aircraft until recently, is photographed over Washington, DC (USAF)

2 Two Bell UH-13J "Sioux" helicopters were purchased in March 1957, for use as Presidential helicopters. Dwight D. Eisenhower became the first Chief Executive to fly in a helicopter on July 13, when he took off from the White House lawn. Both aircraft were retired after 10 years, one going to the Smithsonian, and the other to the USAFM.

3 The USAF's 89th Military Airlift Wing operated six Lockheed VC-140B "Jet Stars" for over 20 years on special government and White House airlift missions. The aircraft on display carried Presidents Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan a number of times.

4 This Beechcraft VC-6A is a standard "King Air" ten-place executive transport with a VIP interior, the only one of its type in USAF service. Used primarily to transport Lyndon B. Johnson between Bergstrom AFB, near Austin, Texas, and the Johnson ranch some 60 miles to the west, it was informally known as the "Lady Bird Special".

5 Adopted from the Lockheed Constellation, this VC-121E served as Ike's personal aircraft between 1954 and 1961. Mrs. Eisenhower christened it *Columbine III* in honor of the official flower of her home state, Colorado.

6 Named *Independence* for President Truman's hometown in Missouri, this Douglas VC-118 differed from the standard DC-6 in that the aft end of the cabin was converted into a stateroom. The main cabin seated 24. It was restored by the USAFM to its eagle-like, former Presidential markings.

A GALLERY OF PRESIDENTIAL AIRCRAFT

In the strictest sense, *Air Force One* is *not* the specific name of a specific aircraft. It is, rather, the call sign of *any* USAF plane carrying the President of the United States, during the period in which he is physically embarked. Each of the aircraft pictured below answered to *Air Force One.*

A similar procedure applies when the President travels on aircraft of another service. The helicopter carrying him between the White House and Camp David, for example, becomes *Marine One* or *Army One* while he is aboard. The only other call sign similar to *Air Force One* is the Vice-President's, *Air Force Two*, and identical rules apply.

All of these aircraft except Serial No. 27000 are currently on display at the U.S. Air Force Museum, outside of Dayton, Ohio, along with FDR's DC-6, *The Sacred Cow*. The photos are courtesy of USAFM unless noted. Presidential aircraft are normally based and maintained by the 1776th Air Base Wing at Andrews AFB, just outside of Washington, DC.

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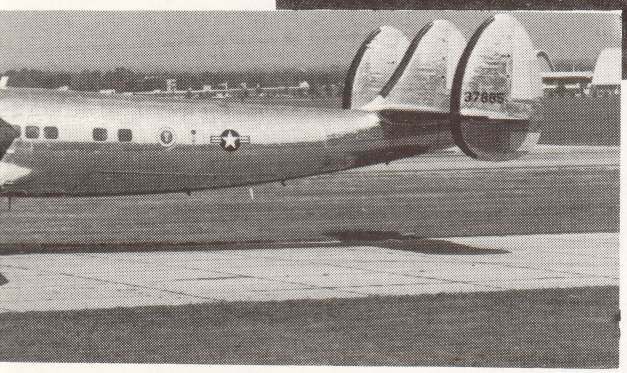

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Kansas. During these hearings, Chennault also lashed out against Lieutenant Colonel Henry Arnold, who would later command the U.S. Army Air Force in World War II. Chennault's irreverant actions and outspoken comments not only ended his chances for any promotion, but alienated him forever from Arnold. Still, Chennault stubbornly refused to play service politics, then or ever. The Howell Commission experience only served to reinforce his distrust of his superiors, which continued to the end of his career.

Resignation

Chennault's reluctance to compromise what he believed in for the sake of his career and his failing health (low blood pressure and bronchitis) led to his resignation from the Army Air Corps on April 30, 1937 with the rank of Captain after the customary 20 years of service. But he had an offer of an excellent job in a foreign land.

China's Offer

As early as 1935 Chennault had been informed that China needed advisors to build their air force. For some time he had considered the position, and in 1937 he was prepared to act. His career had reached its zenith, and he was still under attack for his pursuit views. American businessman William Pawley was Curtiss-Wright's sales representative in China and President of the Central Aircraft Manufacturing Company (CAMCO) in Shanghai. Pawley contacted Chennault and asked him if he was interested. Chennault wasted little time in acceptin his offer at $1,000 per month plus expenses, then he started planning for his retirement.

Chennault in China

By May 1937, Chennault was sailing for China. When he arrived, he reported to Madame Chiang Kai-shek, who had been designated Secretary General of the C.A.F.'s (Chinese Air Force) Commission by her husband, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. From the outset Chennault and Madame Chiang got along and their rapport (he called her "Princess") would prove to be of great benefit for the military situation throughout his service to China.

Chennault found the C.A.F. to be slow and inept, and lacking planes, pilots and organization. The hodge podge of foreign mercenary pilots, who drifted in and out of the C.A.F., were largely ineffectual. In 1937, Russia sent a military mission headed by Generals Georgi Zhukov and Vassili Chuikov (later of Berlin and Stalingrad fame) to help develop Chinese ground forces, and entire Soviet air units fought for China. Because of the war in Europe, however, they were forced to pull out and fight Germans. About the same time Chennault wrote the War Deapartment offering to return to active Air Corps duty because he could offer knowledge which would be of strategic value. They refused his offer.

China's military fortunes hit their lowest ebb in 1940. The C.A.F. was almost totally destroyed, and the nation's lines to the outside world were closed by the Japanese blockade. T.V. Soong, Madame's brother, worked closely with Chennault in getting capital, airfields and material for the C.A.F. Soong's friend in Washington, Thomas Corcoran, was one of President Franklin Roosevelt's closest and most influential advisors. In November of 1940, Chennault and Soong went to Washington to request aid for China. The main thrust of their argument was that China was vital to the strategic interest of the United States, as was Great Britain, which was then being aided with Lend Lease. Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau, Army Chief of Staff General George Marshall, Secretary of the Navy Frank Knox, Secretary of War Henry Stimson were among those who gave Chennault and Soong attention. An agreement was made to ship 100 Curtiss P-40 Warhawks to China. Originally, those aircraft had been designated for Britain, but the British were assured that they would get newer planes in their place.

The Flying Tigers Are Born

Another vital commodity China needed was trained pilots. At Corcoran's urging, Roosevelt issued a verbal executive order April 15, 1941, allowing U.S. military pilots to resign their commissions and join the American Volunteer Group (A.V.G.). These pilots contractually agreed to serve one year in the A.V.G. and then return to their original armed service. Details were quietly handled by Marshall and the cabinet Secretaries.

Pawley's CAMCO was used as a front to hire the pilots for this clandestine air force. After signing an individual contract, each pilot and mechanic was issued a passport by the State Department giving them false identities as baseball players, musicians, bankers, missionaries, and artists. In July 1941 a ship carrying 100 (of 112 recruited) left the United States on a secret voyage to China. Columnist Drew Pearson started asking embarassing questions until a telephone call from the White House silenced him. Chennault's pilots were well paid by 1940 standards: $750 per month for a squadron commander, $600 for a wing man, a $500 bonus for each Japanese plane destroyed, and from $350 to $400 for mechanics.

Training at Loiwing on the Burma border, the A.V.G. was carefully indoctrinated by a master of aerial fighter warfare. Chennault put his pilots through blackboard chalk talks like an athletic coach, critiqued their flight performances over a radio transmitter from the ground, and made written notes which he individually reviewed with each pilot after landing. Chennault had scrupulously studied the strong and weak points of the Japanese Zero fighter, which was a formidable match for the P-40, and he imbued these into each of his aviators.

The Flying Tigers' world-famous shark teeth emblem was first painted on his plane by pilot Eric Shilling, who had seen a news photo of a twin-engined German

Messerschmitt Me-110 of the *Haifischgruppe* (Shark Group) squadron. Chennault saw it, liked it and adopted it for all the P-40s in December of 1941. (Some aviation historians claim this emblem was borrowed from a British unit in North Africa, but the Luftwaffe version is now historically accepted.)

Fighter Tactics

Organized into three squadrons (Hell's Angels, Adams and Eves, and Panda Bears), the Flying Tigers protected Rangoon, Burma, Kunming, China, the Burma Road, and western China.

Their new P-40 Warhawks were armed with four .50-caliber machine guns mounted in the wings and nose. With a top speed of over 300 mph, the Hawk 81 A-3 model had self-sealing fuel tanks, armor and great diving speed. Chennault, a natural teacher, urged his men to:"Use your speed and diving power to make a pass, shoot and break away...Never stay in and fight...Never try to mix it with them (specifically the Zero and Kate Japanese fighters)...Keep going, use hit and run tactics...Fight in two-plane elements with the lead plane attacking with the other providing cover..." These tactics resulted in the Tigers downing 23 Japanese aircraft for every Tiger loss.

Tricks

To deceive the Japanese into thinking they had more planes, Chennault's pilots altered their voices on their radios as they pretended to talk to nonexistent squadrons. They painted their propeller spinners different colors and changed the numbers on their aircraft. They built dummy Warhawks of fabric, wood and paper on the ground, while hiding the real fighters nearby. They hopscotched planes from one airfield to another to flee advancing Japanese army units. These tricks worked, for Radio Tokyo promised to destroy all the Flying Tigers' 200 fighter planes. In fact, they never had more than 55 planes and 70 pilots in service at any one time!

Makeshift Maintenance

Some phenomenal maintenance magic, also attributable to Chennault, kept the P-40s flying. Ground crewman waxed fuselages to gain extra speed from their planes, built larger air scoops for higher operating ceilings, added bomb racks under the aircraft, reused engine oil by continually refiltering it, stuffed rear tire casings with rags, built auxiliary fuel tanks of bamboo and fish glue, and scrounged parts from planes which crashed miles from their bases. Mechanics braved disease, monsoons, heat, humidity, bombings, and strafings, often while working around the clock.

Flying Tiger landing fields were protected by an elaborate air defense warning system devised by Chennault. Using telephones, signal lanterns, radios, and many Chinese eyes, this system effectively directed the Tigers into the skies, and caused many Japanese attackers die honorably for their Emperor.

First Blood

On December 20, 1941, ten Japanese Mitsubishi bombers flew from Hanoi, Indochina to bomb Kunming. They were intercepted by four Tiger P-40s. Only one enemy bomber survived. During their seven-month combat period (December 1941 to July 1942) , Flying Tigers downed 297 Japanese fighters and bombers with only 14 planes lost.

Pilots who served in the original A.V.G. included Bruce Holloway, who later became Air Force general and headed the Strategic Air Command, Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, who later flew in the Marine Corps and was awarded the Medal of Honor, David "Tex" Hill, and Henry Gilbert, the first Tiger to die in combat. Robert L. Scott would become a flight leader of the China Air Task Force after the Tigers were disbanded, and wrote of his experiences in *God Is My Co-Pilot*, which was later made into a movie.

Chennault, who was called "The Old Man" or "Old Leatherface" by his men, cared only for their flying. Off duty the flyers were hell-raisers, who enjoyed shooting out barroom chandeliers with their .45s! Their drinking parties were legends in the China-Burma-India Theatre.

In July 1942, the Flying Tigers were disbanded, and replaced by the China Air Task Force (C.A.T.F.), which later became the Fourteenth Air Force. All Flying Tiger personnel were ordered into the U.S. Army, effective July 4. Brigadier General Clayton Bissell was appointed chief of air operations, outranking newly-promoted BGen. Chennault by one day!

In a face-to-face meeting with the flyers, Bissell tried to bluff the Tigers into acceptance of fate. He threatened:"Any of you who refuse induction into the Army, I guarantee to have your draft boards waiting when you walk down the gangplank off the boat that returns you to U.S. soil. And I do mean you return by boat!" While Chennault was always protective of these men, there was little he could do. Consequently, only six pilots and 35 other personnel followed Chennault into the Army.

"Constant Bickering Inside"

This shift in military fortune was to affect Chennault's career. Bissell and Major General Joseph Stilwell, who was Chiang Kai-shek's chief of staff as well as C.B.I. Theatre commander, had little use for Chennault. Bissell

considered him inept as an administrator and militarily undisciplined, while Stilwell, a staunch ground-warfare dogmatist, castigated Chennault for over-emphasizing air power. Nevertheless, Chennault attacked his new job with single-minded fixity. These personality conflicts caused endless frustration on all levels. Some personnel acidly remarked that C.B.I. really stood for "Constant Bickering Inside".

Chennault's ego sometimes consumed him. For example, he was not informed about Jimmy Doolittle's April 18, 1942 bombing raid on Tokyo from the aircraft carrier *Hornet*. Most of Doolittle's planes crash landed in China. Chennault grated that if he had been told about the raid, he could have established radio beacons to guide the planes to airfields. However, security was so tight that planners feared that the Japanese would monitor any radio signals and mistrusted the Chinese.

John Birch

A young Baptist missionary escorted Doolittle to safety in Kunming, while hiding him from the Japanese. Chennault quickly realized this man could be a valuable asset to the A.V.G. Fiery and temperamental, John Birch first served the A.V.G. as an assistant chaplain, and later as an intelligence officer in the C.A.T.F. Birch devoted himself like a son to Chennault. Toward the end of the war, Birch trekked for 10 days to a Communist-held region in northern China to negociate for a downed, late-model Zero. In a fit of temper during an argument, Birch slapped one of the guards in the face, and was in turn shot and killed. His death deeply affected Chennault and reinforced his own loathing of the Communists. (During the widespread anti-Communist frenzy that gripped this country in the 1950s and 1960s, John Birch was considered a martyr, and the ultra-conservative John Birch Society became a household word.)

Materiel Morass

China was a sinkhole for supplies, and Chennault's air units suffered along with others. Supplies were shipped by sea from the United States to India, shipped by rail across India, flown 500 miles over "The Hump" (the Himalayan Mountains) to Kunming, and then trucked (or mule-carted) another 400 to 700 miles to forward air bases. There were instances where Chinese coolies actually rolled 55-gallon gas drums 100 miles by hand. To make things worse, for every two gallons of fuel delivered by air to Chennault's airfields, three gallons were consumed by the transport planes. For every ton of bombs dropped on the Japanese, eighteen tons of supporting materiel had to be delivered. To further compound this miasma, Chennault and Stilwell continually argued over who had the priority on supplies. Chennault would believe to his death that Stilwell deliberately kept supplies from him.

More Conflict With Bissell

Set in this backdrop of almost impossible conditions, was Bissell, who spared little effort in making Chennault's job difficult. He delighted in sending teams from the Inspector General to inspect aircrews for minor uniform dress infractions, behavior unbecoming military officers, and poor equipment readiness. In the humid tropics, sloppy uniforms were commonplace, men gambled at cards and craps to pass the monotony during 24-hour combat alerts, and supply delays made worn-out equipment inevitable. Another Bissell ploy was to double-check pilots' aerial victories in such a manner as to insult their integrity.

Notwithstanding the fact that Bissell was a World War I ace, Chennault did not respect him. When Bissell accused Chennault of smuggling, the latter replied that the goods in question came from New Delhi, and Bissell was in command of that area! In another confrontation, Chennault accused Bissell of withholding PX goods from his airfields. Bissell evasively replied that Stilwell had ordered the goods withheld. When Bissell offered him a drink of whiskey later, Chennault snapped: "You're drinking my whiskey!"

Chennault had very few qualms about his personal conduct. When venereal disease became a problem in his command, he sent a staff officer to recruit refugee girls from Hong Kong. Stilwell, with puritanical standards, wired a complaint to General Marshall. Chennault, who considered houses of ill repute a military necessity, was cleared. Adding to his difficulties was the cumbersome chain of command structure. Matters which could have been cared for in hours required weeks to go from Chennault's headquarters in Kunming to Bissell in New Delhi and on to Stilwell in Chungking, then back through Biessell to Chennault.

Creation of the 14th AF

FDR sensed that the flagging war effort in China was in part the result of internal strife, and sent Wendell Wilkie there on a fact-finding mission. He returned to Washington with Chennault's request for additional aircraft, and Stilwell's request for support of a major ground offensive. Gen. Marshall, a staunch ally of Stilwell, denied Chennault's appeal for more forces, but with Roosevelt's urging, the C.A.T.F. was replaced by the newly-formed Fourteenth Air Force. Roosevelt then promoted Chennault to Major General, and named him its commander. The 14th AF was independent of Bissell, but Chennault was still subordinate to Stilwell.

In April 1943, at the urging of Chiang Kai-shek, both Stilwell and Chennault were called to Washington for strategic planning. Both generals met separately with FDR and offered their recommendations. As a result, Chennault received priority for supplies, and was able to build air bases in eastern China by September. He was refused permission, however, both to bomb Japan (because Arnold didn't want Japanese defenses alerted for impending B-29 raids)

(continued on pg. 19)

DIVISION NEWS

ATLANTIC COAST DIVISION DISSOLVED: B-17 FUNDING DELIBERATED BY BOARD

by Jim Hanford

Dissolution of the Atlantic Coast Division (ACD) and extensive discussion over how best to fund the restoration of *Yankee Lady* were among the actions taken by the National Board in February and March.

Concern over the ACD was voiced in February, when the Board noted that the Division Council had not submitted a motion to conduct business, nor have they forwarded new member applications to the National Headquarters. The Board's action to dissolve the division was based upon the additional report that the Divisional Council members have resigned or have failed to renew their YAF memberships, and the former provisional chairman had expressed the desire to disaffiliate from the YAF. Division members who wish to remain in the YAF may join or revert back to the Northeast Division (NED). The NED's L-2 is presently at the Millville Airport, in the custody of the Fixed Base Operator, who is performing an annual inspection.

Please see the article, "534th Fortress Section Proposal" under Restoration News (page 16) for details of the Board's discussion relative to the B-17 restoration. In other actions, the Board authorized representatives of the Mid-Michigan Division (MMD) to enter into negotiations for the purchase of both an airplane and a hangar in which to keep it. The aircraft is a 1949 Ryan Model 205 Navion, a single-engine, all-metal, four-place, low-wing monoplane, which was owned by deceased member **Louis C. Hook.** The type served in the USAF under the designation, L-17.

The hangar, also owned by Hook, is located at Dalton Airport, some six miles northeast of the MMD meeting location at Bishop Airport in Flint. It is a pole barn construction, with a concrete floor, taxi-way and parking. Both motions were approved by the Board. Also approved were motions to conduct business for 1990 on behalf of MMD, NED, Saginaw Valley and Wisconsin/Illinois Stateline Division.

Other Board business included authorization for the C-47 to transport members at their own expense to the B-17 Co-op meeting scheduled for April 20-22 in Oshkosh, WI, and appointed Board officers. **Ralph Gilpin** was reappointed Corporate Secretary and **Kathie Dallape** was reappointed Corporate Treasurer. **Richard Willoughby** was appointed Director to fill a one-year vacancy on the Board.

During the various officers' reports it was noted that the recently restored B-24J, *All American*, is expected to remain overnight at the Willow Run hangar on June 11-12, 1990, enroute to the Flint Air Show. This stop is being made possible through donations by General Motors and *Bridges Magazine* of Ann Arbor. The weekend of June 23-24 has been established for the 1990 Willow Run Air Show. There are no plans to feature a military jet demonstration team. (For further details, please see related article on page 6.)

Division Reports

Since the first of the year NED representatives have been visiting various sites within a 50-mile radius of East Caldwell, NJ, which could be possible candidates for relocating their headquarters and museum. At this writing, however, no decision has been made.

There was a report on the status of the Flint Air Show. Readers who plan to attend this show, scheduled for June 9-10, are advised to confirm details in advance. ✪

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

by Charlie Lingenfelter

The following new members have joined our ranks since my last report in the January-February issue of Yankee Wings. Please welcome them, and introduce them to one or more of our projects, work groups or activities.

Willow Run: #3469 Gerry Bryce, #3471 Roger A. Bartels, #3472 Roy Corey, #3475 Steve Scerbak, #3476 Robert S. Dix, #3477 Betty L. Dumont, #3478 Frank Scruggs, # 3479 Wm. Mravinec, #3480 Nagel Post, #3481 Glenda Dix, #3482 Martin R. Leblanc, #3483 Lawrence G. Redmond, #3484 Rodger A. Devine, #3485 Betty J. Gaines, #3486 Don Leckey, #3487 James A. Berg, #3488 Aaron M. Peters, #3490 David E. Patterson and #3491 Edwin Anderson.

Northeast: #3473 Brian Stolarczyk and #3489 Michael S. Hardick.

Saginaw Valley: #3470 Edward L. Thompson.

Wisconsin/Illinois: #3474 Frank Moccero.

NOTICE:

You must renew your membership on time. This is the same month in which you joined the Yankee Air Force.

Sufficient notice (two months) of the expiration date is mailed to all members on a membership renewal form, and a self-addressed return envelope is included.

An additional 30-day grace period is allowed for the return of the dues payment. **Failure to renew** by the end of the grace period will result in your name being removed from the active membership roll and **you lose all rights, priviledges and membership number.**

Please be prompt with your renewals to allow us to maintain accurate records and keep your status current in the Yankee Air Force.

Thank you for your cooperation.

RESTORATION NEWS

534th Fortress Section Proposal
by Jim Hanford

At the March meeting of the National Board of Governors, a motion was made to create a new YAF sub-unit, the 534th Fortress Section, "to more effectively manage the repair, restoration and outfitting of the B-17." The new unit, hereafter referred to as 'the Section', would "...raise, budget and spend B-17 dedicated funds without preapproval of the Board." During discussion **Bill Rodgers** advised that the progress on the B-17 has so far been the result of the investment of member time and talents, however, the work remaining will require a major investment of money - somewhere in the area of $150,000.

The Section would make an accounting to the Board at least quarterly, but the funds which it raised could not be diverted by the Board to some other need. Conversely, the Section would not ask the Board for appropriations. Separate deposit and checking accounts would be maintained by the Section, although all donations to the B-17 Fund would first be recorded by the YAF Treasurer. The Section would be managed by four officers, who could solicit loans from YAF members under certain specific conditions.

The creation of the Section would be for the specific purpose of managing the restoration of *Yankee Lady*. It would not have the authority to organize flight crews, schedule fly-in appearances, or trade/sell parts or artifacts not specifically in the B-17 parts inventory. The Section would automatically dissolve upon the issuance of an FAA Airworthiness Certificate, at which time all assets and debts would revert to the Corporation.

Many ramifications of the proposed arrangement were discussed, however to resolve the agenda item, the Board approved an amended motion expressing "only the sense of the proposal". By this action the Board indicated that it had not approved any of the particulars of the proposal, hence the proposal as offered could not be initiated on this vote, and that the revised particulars could subsequently be returned to the Board for further discussion and final disposition.

Part Trades

Other discussion centered on a motion to trade the power-operated turret in the Yankee Air Museum's B-24 Room to an individual who is restoring an AT-11 gunnery training aircraft in exchange for a large group of badly-needed B-17 parts. It was noted that the Wisconsin/Illinois Division is also restoring an AT-11, and may have an interest in this property. Comments were also made that the turret is a major museum artifact, and it is not good policy to trade such items away, regardless of the apparent benefits to the YAF. The Board refused to vote on the motion, pending receipt of more details concerning the listing and valuation of parts being offered.

Nose Art

B-17 crew member **Don Burke** introduced **Gary Redfern,** who displayed winning sketches for *Yankee Lady's* proposed nose art. Don suggested that the nose art be completed during the Memorial Day observance. ✪

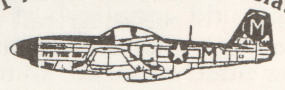
Reunions...

P-47 Thunderbolt Pilots
May 11-13, 1990; Norfolk, VA
Contact: Bob Richards, PO Box 3299, Topsail Beach, NC 28445
(919) 328-8781

China-Burma-India Hump Pilots
Sept. 12-16, 1990; Virginia Beach, VA
Contact: Mrs. Jan Thies, PO Box 458, Poplar Bluff, MO 63901
(314) 785-2420

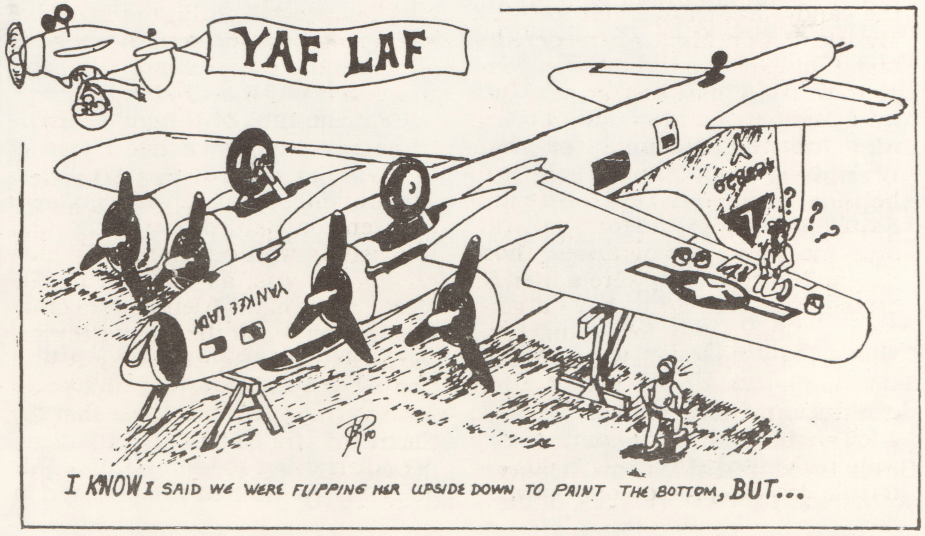
P-40 Warhawk Pilots
Sept. 26-29, 1990; Hampton, VA
Contact: Bob Klump, 1443 Big Bethel Road, Hampton, VA 23666
(804) 766-3485

★★ P-51 Mustang Pilots Association ★★



P-51 Mustang Pilots
Oct. 26-28, 1990; Santa Maria, CA
Contact: Capt. Pete Hardiman, 3233 San Pedro Way, Union City, CA 64587
(415) 487-2391

It is noted that Northeast Division member Herbert O. Fisher is the Public Relations Coordinator for all of the above associations.



by Larry Redmond

YEAR END REPORT

Saginaw Valley Recalls 1989

Dear Uncle Yankee,

This is that time of the year when I write to all of my favorite relatives and let them know of my goings-on for the past year. The year started with concern for my friend, **Bob Perrine**, who had surgery. He survived it and looks real healthy.

In March, I fulfilled my duties to support Public Television when I answered the phones for a fund raising time at Channel 28, WFUM in Flint. They helped the cause by running a documentary on Jimmy Doolittle. I had a good time, even if the pizza that I ordered was a little lame. You should consider doing this for your local Public Broadcaster; it makes you feel good and lets people know who you are. I also sent you some money to help with your debt situation. I hope that you spent it well. Pay me back someday, if you can; no big hurry. I really enjoyed seeing a neat display of classic aircraft when I went to Lansing for the dedication of the new State Museum. Your C-47 sure looked good flying over that new building. There is no better example of this great warbird.

My friend, **Sharon Wright** received the Meritorious Service Award from the Civil Air Patrol in April. In addition, her capabilities in handling our finances are superb. I would like to publicly thank her for her wonderful attention to the details that keep things happy and smooth around here.

In May Swartz Creek asked me to bring your Tri-motor float to their Home Town Days parade. Thanks for loaning it to me. The crowds enjoyed the display and the little kids loved the candy that I threw out to them. My friend **Doc Madison** recorded a tape that explained who I was, complete with a music background and introduction. Doc always works hard when I need extra help to do an event. We had some new friends show up to help me this month; **Don Novak** and **Faite Mack**. I was glad to visit you for Memorial Day rememberances. Those Korean War veterans were a friendly bunch, and seemed to have a good time. Thank you for letting Doc Madison set up his display information on the role of the Liaison Aircraft during our military conflicts. I learned a lot about the Korean conflict; they were truly a forgotten people doing a terrific job to protect our ideals.

June is always a fun time because of all of the air shows that are put on, but this year there was a note of sadness in the loss of my friend **Cleland Wilmore.** I hope that you have been enjoying the transcripts about his war exploits in the interesting China-Burma-India theatre. I will miss Cleland very much. His illness kept him from visiting me much in recent years, but his spirit for historical preservation will always stay with me and my friends. I met some new people in June that were really anxious to visit with you. They are **Paul C. Guiett, Stan Wojes, Gloria Eby-Buck,** and **Vernon Buck.** When they come to visit you I am sure you will treat them well. I have a large group of associates that we both know that live in Saginaw and environs. They had a party at Harry Browne Airport and I was eager to help. A good time was had by all. You should have seen my buddy **Joe Oberlee** try (successfully) to get into **Ralph Gilpin's** Cessna 120. They flew for about an hour, and it was equally humorous to see Joe get back out when they landed, but he reported that he would love to do it again. The Wayne County Airshow saw my buddies work hard to sell beer for your benefit. I enjoyed the Blue Angels and all the extra commotion, but the crummy weather on Sunday was a real bummer.

I had a good time in August with events at Tri-City Airport, Drummond Island, and a neat Fly-In at Rock County Airport in Janesville, Wisconsin. I was glad to meet so many new people that I can call friends. Back in Flint, I met **Eugene J. Pastori, Jr.** and was glad to welcome him to our cause. Some of my buddies enjoyed visiting the EAA folks at Oshkosh; maybe someday we can all meet there and share the good times that we all hear about.

September 16 & 17 were both red-letter days on my calendar. I was so happy to be with you that weekend. The drinking, eating and dancing were excellent on Saturday evening; and the visiting with our mutual friends on Sunday was, as usual, a terrific treat. Some of my friends were quite honored by you at the Dinner Dance. **Jerry Fantini, Sharon Wright** and **Joe Oberlee** all received individual awards, and I was glad to see that the Flight Crew of United Flight 232 received an award as well. It was a little colder than desired when I had a bunch of our compatriots meet at Harry Browne Airport in Saginaw. I had a great time munching on a hotdog or two and swapping lies with a lot of great people. **Leonard Wright** saw fit to arrange airplane rides for the little ones of all ages, and some enjoyed the roadster trips given by **Ken Pol.**

I am not one to be superstitious, but I now have a real dislike for Friday the 13th. My long-time good friend was killed in a plane crash that day in October. **Lou Hook** was a real comfort and joy to have around. His wit, humor and general demeanor will be missed by all who knew him. It was impossible to hold back the tears at the funeral services.The man was well liked by all, and I truly feel that this is a great loss.

Good news should always help to balance the bad, and I was pleased to see that **Joe Oberlee** was elected Vice-President of your National Organization. That meant that **Dennis Garner** became my Council Chair for 1990 and 1991. Dennis will have great support and help from **Jerry Fantini, Sharon Wright, Leonard Wright, Bob Perrine, Marvin Cook, Norm Dively, Mike McMillan, and Doc Madison.** Joe Oberlee will continue to help by being the Liaison Officer with the National Board of Directors.

Dennis Garner, Bob Perrine and Leonard Wright visited Chicago on a terrible day, weather-wise, to present a plaque to Captain Al Haynes. I was pleased that they could acknowledge the efforts of United Flight Crew 232 in this fashion. They reported to me that this man was quite surprised and pleased to receive this award. I hope that others appreciate the monumental tasks that Captain Haynes and his cohorts accomplished that day.

Brad Rager became the newest of my associates in December. I am sure that he will be a help to Dennis and the rest of my officers and management for the years to come.

1990 will see me try to expand my sphere of influence over the Bishop International Airport Authority Board. I sent them letters of intent regarding airshows at Bishop Airport and the desire to establish a museum there as well. I hope that Dennis Garner has success in getting a positive response.

I hope that 1990 is good for you, your family and all your associates. I remain...Your loving nephew, Mid.

Editors Note: The Saginaw Valley year-end report arrived too late for inclusion in our Jan/Feb issue. It is our intention to include excerpts from the Cleland Wilmore tapes in future issues.

MUSEUMOLOGY

by Brian Rogers

THE WILLOW RUN ROOM

The Willow Run Room at the Yankee Air Force Museum tells with pictures, framed articles and other memorabilia, the story of an auto pioneer, a soybean field near a stream, a mile-long factory and a 153-acre airfield built in only four months.

According to a framed article by Carol Anderson and John Overmeyer, the desperate need of our future World War II allies for bombs and bombers led to the construction on a field near a stream called Willow Run Creek of what would become the world's largest bomber factory.

Land owner Henry Ford's ground crews began clearing the field of soybeans and the remnants of George Wiard's apple orchard on March 28, 1941. Between that date and September 10, 1942 when the first completed B-24 Liberator rolled off the assembly line, the Anderson-Overmeyer article tells of 24-hour-per-day construction work, steelworkers working under floodlight, bricklayers fighting winter chill with small oil heaters and runways for a major airport laid in only four months. The plant cost $63,000,000.

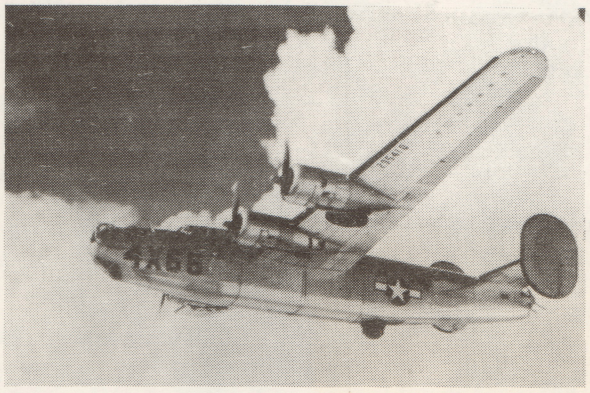
By June 30, 1945 when the last B-24 built at Willow Run rolled into the Michigan sunshine, 6,792 Liberators had been built there. At one time in 1944 the plant was turning out a plane every hour. Altogether, counting aircraft produced at factories in Tulsa, Fort Worth, San Diego, and Dallas, 18,440 B-24 Liberator bombers were manufactured.

It is impossible to describe all the photographs and displays in the Willow Run Room, but several perhaps contribute more than others to the telling of the Willow Run story.

There is a photo article, for example, from the June 28, 1945 edition of the *Ann Arbor News* which shows workmen digging footings for the plant in an empty field in the spring of 1941.

Also in the article is a photo of the last shift leaving the plant after the final B-24 was built. The caption under the picture states that, at the peak of production 42,000 workers were employed there, and that the highest production month was March 1944, when the Army accepted 462 Liberators.

A copy of the front page of the June 24, 1945 *Detroit News* describes, in an article by Ralph R. Watts, the return of 400 B-24's to Willow Run for storage and reconditioning for possible use in the Pacific. Watts wrote that the planes were arriving at the rate of about 50 a day, and were coming from Eighth Air Force bases in England and Fifteenth Air Force bases in Italy. They were flown to Bradley Field, Connecticut where Third Ferrying Group of the Air Transport Command from Romulus Field flew them to Willow Run. ✪



A total of 6,792 Liberators were produced at Willow Run. This aircraft has the serial number under the left wing, and radar in place of the lower ball turret. (USAF)

The Write Stuff

We Get Letters!

March 18, 1990
Dear Editor:

The November-December 1988 issue of *Yankee Wings* carried an interesting article about the YAF B-25D, *Gallant Warrior*, Ser. No. 43-3634. However, at one point the article was a little confusing and there were a couple of typographical errors that added to the confusion. In order to clear up my understanding I corresponded with the author and recently received his comments.

In the first column on page 12, the author discusses unit assignments of both #43-3634 and #43-3629. The first paragraph refers to #43-3629 being a part of the 488 Bomb Sqdn. while the second paragraph deals with #43-3634 being assigned to the 489 Bomb Sqdn.

In the middle of the second paragraph the sentence should read, "...their B-52s destroyed *when* Mt. Vesuvius erupted..."

In the middle of the first paragraph in the center column, the sentence should read, "...what amounts to a *unit* inventory..." In his letter the author further states that his data show 1219 serial numbers with another 200 plus as going to the Mediterranean area, but that he still does not have the positive proof that he wants.

There are a couple of more obvious typos in the third column, but they do not alter the sense of the article.

Sincerely,
H. Sherman

Editor's Comment: In an effort to improve the accuracy of our publication, a proof-reading procedure has been added before the layout phase of each issue. Furthermore, we have initiated the "Corrigendum" column, which lists errors in content, and their corrections. ~JMH.

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(Tailspins~continued from pg. 14)
and to command the B-29 forces soon to be based in China.

In the spring of 1944 the Japanese launched a major offensive, which overran the eastern China bases. This resulted in a renewed antagonism between Stilwell and Chennault, forcing the latter to appeal directly to Roosevelt. His letter described not only supply difficulties, but especially the ineffective leadership, including factionalism within the Chinese government, and Chiang's preoccupation with defeating the Communists more than the Japanese. FDR's response was to dispatch Vice President Henry Wallace on another fact-finding trip. Chiang told Wallace that he had lost confidence in Stilwell, and in October, Stilwell was replaced by MGen. Albert Wedemeyer.

Chennault Relieved

The end of the war in Europe resulted in much confusion as plans were formed to shift veteran units to the Pacific for the impending invasion of Japan. Little was known of the devastating effects of the Allied submarine and strategic bombing campaigns on the Home Islands, nor were those in the field aware of the existence of the atomic bomb. Accordingly the 10th and 14th Air Forces were merged under the command of MGen. George E. Stratemeyer, much to the resentment of Chennault. Furthermore, rumors surfaced of smuggling in the 14th AF. Although Chennault was eventually cleared, some of his personnel were implicated, and the veiled suspicion continued to plague him. Finally Arnold had had enough of Claire Chennault, and relieved him on August 31, 1945. The old Tiger officially retired two months later, and returned to Louisiana for rest.

Post War China

As the Communists and Nationalists fought a civil war, Chennault formed the Chinese Nationalist Relief and Rehabilitaion Administration Air Transport, or Civil Air Transport (CAT) with the help of private funds. With 15 C-46 and four C-54 transport planes, the CAT flew supplies for the Nationalists. Chennault vigorously lobbied both Congress and the American public for aid to China. After months of effort, and few results, Chennault and his partners sold CAT to the Central Intelligence Agency in 1950. After the eventual expulsion of the Nationalists from the Chinese mainland, CAT planes flew operations from Formosa in support of guerilla activities, and aided the French in Indochina in 1954. Chennault ended his participation in CAT that year.

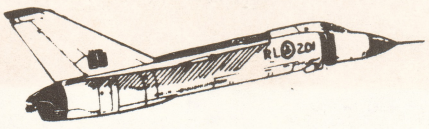
Once more he returned to Monroe, Louisiana, and enjoyed a leisurely life of fishing and hunting with family and friends. Suffering from lung cancer, he died on July 27, 1957. Pallbearers at Arlington National Cemetary included old Tigers Robert L. Scott and Bruce Holloway. Chennault loved to quote a poem by A.E. Housman, "Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries" which best summarizes the individualistic China Tiger's colorful career:

These, in the day when heaven was falling,
The hour when earth's foundations fled.
Followed their mercenary calling,
Took their wages and are dead.
Their shoulders held the sky suspended:
They stood and earth's foundations stay.
What God abandoned these defended
And saved the sum of things for pay.

Epilogue

Retired Air Force Brigadier General Robert L. Scott placed a memorial tablet near their old air field at Kunming in August of 1980 which read:

GENERAL CLAIRE LEE CHENNAULT
FLYING TIGERS
WE, YOUR MEN,
HONOR YOU FOREVER



(Division News cont. from pg. 17)
The March issue of *The Pea Shooter* noted that the T-28 display engine was delivered to Harry Browne Airport on March 3, courtesy of Treasurer **Bob McLaughlin's** son, **Bob. George Brown** will restore the engine and mount it on a rolling stand for display with their other engines.

NED Searches for New Home

Using Caldwell, NJ as the center, the Northeast Division has contacted eleven airports within a 50-mile radius. Six of those were eliminated because of high costs, no room, or lack of response. The Research Committee Chairman, **Bob Fenner**, advised that each of the five remaining airports offer possibilities for the NED's new home, however more research is necessary, and a number of loose ends must be tied. The selection criteria will, in large measure be; which deal offers the most for the least expenditure. All of this purposeful effort sends the strong message that the NED is "...not floundering [but] just trying to find our place in the sun."

Mojave Winds

The March issue of *The Yankee Clipper* carried the following report from Mojave Airport in Southern California, where members **Lee** and **Diane Herron** operate an aviation retail sales business. Lee and Diane were the founding President and Secretary of the Northeast Division.

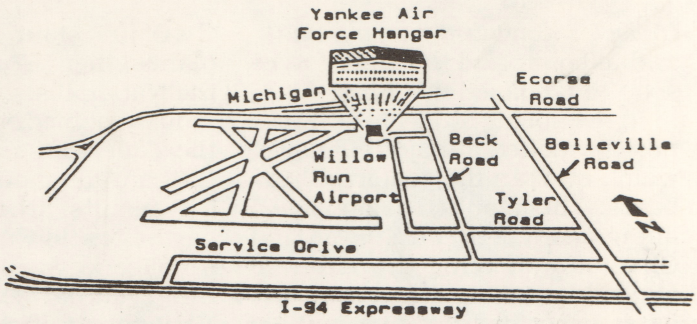
"During our short winter, one inch of snow fell, [and] it rained 3/4 inch,...but the Daffodils are already pushing through the soil, so Spring can't be far off.

"Burt Rutan's Scaled Composites Co. is unveiling his newest aircraft, ARES, this month. A light attack, single-engine, left side intake turbofan, armed with a GAU-12/U 25mm Gatling Gun on the right side, she is a Close Air Support-Anti Helicopter weapon that will also carry Air-to-Air and Air-to-Ground missiles. The name ARES stands for 'Agile Responsive Effective Support' with minimum complexity. Of course it has a canard and is of composite materials!

"The airport is quiet, hangar construction projects are going 7 days a week and the entire airport water service and fire fighting system is being replaced at a cost of 3 million dollars."

YAF HEADQUARTERS - WILLOW RUN AIRPORT

Take I-94 to Belleville Road exit, North to Tyler Road, west to Beck Road, turn right and enter through second gate on your left. Or take I-275 to exit 20 - Ecorse Road. Take Ecorse Road west to Beck, proceed south to first gate on your right.



CALENDAR

MAY 1990

2 - Headquarters Division General Membership (WR)
2 - Northeast Division Council - 7:00 (NE)
3 - Wisconsin/Illinois Division General Membership (WI/IL)
8 - Saginaw Valley General Membership (SV)
8 - Membership Staff (WR)
9 - Mid-Michigan General Membership (MM)
10 - B-17 Crew (WR)
12 - Security Committee - 10:00 (WR)
12 - Static Restoration Crews - 2:00 (WR)
15 - Saginaw Valley Division Council (SV)
16 - National Board of Governors (WR)
16 - Northeast Division General Membership - 7:00 (NE)
22 - Wisconsin/Illinois Division Council - 7:00 (WI/IL)
23 - Mid-Michigan Division Council (MM)
24 - Publication Staff (WR)

JUNE 1990

6 - Headquarters Division General Membership (WR)
6 - Northeast Division Council - 7:00 (NE)
7 - Wisconsin/Illinois Division General Membership (WI/IL)
9 - Security Committee - 10:00 (WR)
9 - Static Restoration Crews - 2:00 (WR)
12 - Saginaw Valley General Membership (SV)
12 - Membership Staff (WR)
13 - Mid-Michigan General Membership (MM)
14 - B-17 Crew (WR)
19 - Saginaw Valley Division Council (SV)
20 - National Board of Governors (WR)
20 - Northeast Division General Membership 7:00 (NE)
21 - Publications Staff (WR)
23-24 - 1990 Willow Run Air Show
26 - Wisconsin/Illinois Division Council 7:00 (WI/IL)
27 - Mid-Michigan Division Council (MM)

NOTES:

- All meetings begin at 7:30pm, unless otherwise noted.
- An entry marked with an asterisk (*) indicates more information may be found elsewhere in this issue.
- Any additions or corrections to the calendar should be submitted to Jim Hanford, Tel. (313) 562-3283, by the copy deadline shown on page 2.

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